DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 026 151 RC 002 753

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Language Instruction and Intergroup Relations, An Analysis of Language Instruction (Spanish and English) to Spanish-Speaking Learners in California Public Schools, in Relation to the Search for Better Intergroup Relations.

California State Dept. of Education, Sacramento.

Pub Date 2 Oct 67

Note-5p.

Available from-Bureau of Intergroup Relations, California State Dep. of Educ., 721 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, California 95814

EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.35

Descriptors-Classroom Integration, *Educational Philosophy, *English (Second Language), Ethnic Grouping, *Fles Programs, Homogeneous Grouping, *Intergroup Relations, Language Instruction, Mexican Americans, Spanish, *Spanish Speaking

Identifiers-California

An effort has been made in this study to elucidate what social implications are inherent in the environmental teaching situations, and their correlation to the basic purposes and aims of each language instructional program. FLES, English as a Second Language, and Spanish for Spanish-speaking children programs are discussed. It is pointed out that the social value of these programs seldom becomes an integral part of the total program, thus, an opportunity to teach better intergroup relations is missed. The shortcomings of classroom grouping procedures are reviewed to indicate that they defeat their own purpose. It is recommended that language programs reflect community problems and needs, and Spanish instruction be used as a vehicle of intergroup understanding with English as a second language providing a means to that end. (SW)

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ED026151

LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION AND INTERGROUP RELATIONS

An analysis of language instruction (Spanish and English) to Spanish-speaking learners in California public schools, in relation to the search for better intergroup relations

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RC 002753

The objective of this study is to explore the diverse language instructional programs addressed to Spanish-speaking learners throughout the State of California, and to clarify and define the basic philosophy, goals and purposes of such programs. This study endeavors to elucidate what social implications are inherent in the environmental teaching situation and their correlation to the basic purposes and aims of each respective program. Moreover, this study is concerned with the total educational program insofar as better intergroup relations are concerned and specifically how the language program may contribute vitally to the democratic processes of integration and involvement in the classroom.

It should be stated at the outset that much confusion exists among the lay public concerning the aims and purposes of language programs (both Spanish and English) and to whom these programs are geared. It also should be stated that present Spanish programs addressed to all children, (Anglo, Negro, Spanish-speaking, etc.) often entertain lofty educational ideals of "world understanding", "cultural enrichment", "world brotherhood", while the problems of the local community are overlooked, the opportunities to use community resources are by-passed, and what is even more important, the need to make classroom recitation and inter-action a dynamic experience in democratic living remains unfilled. In other words, the basic philosophy and goals of the Foreign Language program in California (92% to 94% of which is devoted to Spanish) is not oriented toward the betterment of intergroup relations in the classroom, in the school, and in the community.

1. FLES in California. (Foreign Languages in the Elementary Schools). The mandated Foreign Language program in the elementary schools (Education Code 7604.6), concerning 6th, 7th, and 8th grade instruction, does not specify the language of instruction. This is left to the individual school board and district. Between 92% and 94% of this instruction is Spanish.

The basic purpose of this program, outlined by the professional societies to which the State Department of Education of California subscribes (Modern Language Association of America; the AAT's USOE, etc.) as well as the Spanish Curriculum Committee of the State Department of Education, is to teach a second language in all four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) in the New Key--the audio-lingual method. The object of instruction is bilingualism--or the closest approximation to it. Culture and civilization is introduced to reinforce learnings and understandings about the life, art, and people of the society studied.

All children may participate in this instruction, regardless of ethnic background, intelligence quotient, or academic level. Some FLES programs start before the 6th grade; some are addressed to only the highly motivated and culturally enriched children; some exclude the Spanish-speaking child under one of five exclusion clauses of the "Casey Bill" which authorized the program; many methods of instruction are used, including educational television, specialist teachers, self-contained classroom teachers, audio-visual aids, etc. What is important to state here, as it has been said before, is that the social value of FLES has seldom become an integral part of the program, either in objectives or practices, and the opportunity to teach better intergroup relations escapes the attention of many administrators and teachers. The latter do not know what to do with Spanish-speaking children during the Spanish program, and in many instances these youngsters are excluded from the program entirely.

2. ESL. There are two basically different programs of English as a Second Language. In one the teacher uses the Spanish language as a bridge to teach English, thereby strengthening the learners' self-respect and cultural heritage. In the other, the teacher does not use the native tongue, or perhaps uses it only incidentally to instruction, and he is not concerned with bilingualism or the social problems of this learner; he is only concerned with linguistic achievement in English. Both programs are professionally defensible on purely linguistic grounds, but it is unfortunate that in many instances "what" we teach is emphasized at the expense of "whom" we teach. The social goals of our society are not considered legitimate problems of the classroom, which contains children of diverse ethnic and language backgrounds.

3. Spanish for Spanish-speaking children. This is a relative newcomer in some parts of our state, although in New Mexico and Texas there have been various programs and experiments in this subject for several years. This program has two parts:

a. Spanish-language and culture instruction for the Spanish-speaking child to develop fluency in the language of his heritage, to develop pride in his culture as well as social identity for emotional and psychological reasons, and to cultivate the language talents and capabilities this youngster has acquired at home in order to broaden his humanistic understanding, develop world awareness, and contribute substantively to the mainstream of American life, be it in the community, the Peace Corps, AID, other government programs in Central and South America or Spain, or for his own personal enrichment.

b. To broaden the base and establish psychological rapport between teacher and learner in order to begin English instruction using Spanish as the familiar frame of reference. That is, Spanish as a bridge to learn English. This approach differs from the ESL approach in that the social philosophy predominates and linguistic goals are a means to an end--bilingualism and biculturalism--in which the ultimate objective is language development in two equal spheres of articulation, and social integration of Mexican heritage in the mainstream of American life. Cultural pluralism is respected and sought, that is, the ability of the Mexican American child to function effectively, competitively, and happily in both language and culture environments.

4. The problem of language segregation. Segregation of Mexican American children or any group of Spanish-speaking youngsters in a homogeneous educational situation is often carried out as an attack upon a mythical villain, "Spanish", as an expedient way of bringing together children with a similar "problem", or as an isolation of the contaminating malignancy of children whose citizenship remains somewhat foreign or uncertain. It is most unfortunate that good intentions cause such bad results, partly because of a lack of knowledge concerning America's Spanish-speaking societies, and partly because of a blindness which loses sight of our educational democracy. For most of the children in question are American citizens, or will be some day, and practices of segregation along linguistic lines stand in the way of the very goal which they endeavor to achieve. If the classroom cannot be an example of the American democratic process, then it defeats its own purposes. Isolation and segregation of children for the purposes of instruction deny interaction and exchanges among children of diverse backgrounds. They rob the child of the opportunity to see himself and his neighbor in a realistic environment in which social differences coexist and respect one another in social harmony. This adulteration of the classroom with its corresponding weakness and myopia penalizes all children: the Spanish-speaking child because it deprives him of making a contribution among

his peers; the Anglo child because it deprives him of the benefits to be derived from exchanges with his Hispanic classmates; the Negro child because it denies him the opportunity to gain from this classroom inter-action and learn that language differences discriminate just like color; and other youngsters because they are cheated out of the experience of belonging to a society of many ethnic and social differences, in which the classroom prepares our children for the challenges of community living. Thus, if the classroom does not convey a realistic picture of American society, our children will not be prepared to live a healthy and happy life in a community fraught with ignorance, prejudice and fear.

5. Perhaps an effective substitute for homogeneous grouping would be to bring the Spanish-speaking children together for language orientation, English phonetics, and appreciation of both bilingual and bicultural abilities. Then move these children into the Spanish FLES classes and integrate the Spanish program in the elementary school with both Anglo and Mexican American youngsters. Such children could exchange their skillful use of Spanish for assistance in English and reading. Using Spanish in the classroom would give them new pride, new status, and new incentive. Moreover, Spanish instruction could become more and more bilingual, until what is presently termed the "Spanish program" would in reality be a "Spanish and English" program. When Spanish and English are used without restraint in the classroom, without stigma, without apologies, classroom atmosphere will lead to better Spanish and English learning. By implication, the dignity of children who come from Spanish speaking homes will be enhanced, and their psychological desire to learn English greatly strengthened.

6. Our concern for intergroup relations embraces all children in the classroom, school and community. But we are equally concerned that the opportunity to study another language is not abridged by our concern for the Spanish-speaking child and the English and Spanish programs addressed to him. Therefore, we would not like to see the programs of French, German, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, etc., suffer because we wish to improve the quality of education in one area. In a smaller degree, the social purpose of language instruction exists among Chinese-Americans, Japanese-Americans, Portuguese-Americans, Italian-Americans in California, just as the Filipino, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American groups in California society are helped in the Spanish program. When we improve the Spanish program among Spanish-speaking learners or non-Spanish-speaking learners, or the English program among Spanish-speaking learners, let us make provisions for the teaching of other languages.

7. Summary and Recommendations. The teaching of Spanish to Spanish-speaking learners and the teaching of English to Spanish-speaking learners represents the same coin viewed from both sides. Language instruction, both English and Spanish, among the Spanish-speaking population of California is a complex and serious problem. This problem has not been clarified or resolved to this date because there is not a program which vigorously addresses itself to the Spanish-speaking learner with initiative and imagination. Moreover, the severity of the problem is counterbalanced by the advantage and talent of the bilingual person, either because he possesses language ability or because he possesses the potential for language ability. Thus, the widely misunderstood "problem" of the Spanish-speaking learner is also a gift and an asset.

But language programs in the public schools of California, particularly as they refer to Spanish instruction, fail to take advantage of an excellent opportunity to improve intergroup relations. Despite their sophisticated goals and objectives, they overlook community problems and needs. It should be stated that international understanding

begins at home, in fact in the classroom. Such programs should incorporate in their humanistic outlook the critical needs of our community. World understanding and cultural enrichment are noble goals of humanistic endeavor, but they are meaningless if ethnic tensions and racial discord destroy the integrity of the school. There is a vital need to make Spanish instruction a vehicle of intergroup understanding in the State of California, and English as a second language a means to that end.

Segregated classrooms defeat their own purpose. Language segregation among Spanish-speaking learners is undemocratic, unrealistic, and retrogressive. Psychologically, the Spanish-speaking learner develops a resistance to English instruction which later is impossible to overcome.

It would be well to reflect and understand that language learning is the key to the door of happiness and success, or to the door of reticence and failure, depending on whether we lose sight of the human being to whom we gear our teaching and the vision of a better society.

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